



K-8 DISCOVER Indian Legends

INDIAN LEGENDS

Similar accounts of the origin of Devils Tower are shared by many American Indians. Both the Kiowa and the Cheyenne people speak of a giant bear clawing Devils Tower. One version of the Cheyenne legend speaks of seven brothers.

The wife of the oldest brother was carried away by a large bear. The bear took her to his cave. The husband was very sad and would cry to the bear. The youngest brother had great powers and asked his oldest brother to make a bow and four blunt arrows for him. He asked for two red arrows with eagle feathers and two black arrows with buzzard feathers.

All the brothers then went to the bear's cave. At the entrance, the youngest brother told the others to sit and wait for him. He then turned himself into a gopher and entered the bear's den. He found the giant bear lying with his head on the woman's lap. He put the bear to sleep and had the woman crawl through the tunnel to the entrance, after which the hole closed up. The youngest brother turned back into an Indian and they all hurried away. When the bear awoke, he and the other bears, of which he was the leader, followed the Indians.

The Indians arrived at the place where Devils Tower now exists. The youngest brother took the rock that he always carried and asked the six brothers and the woman to close their eyes. He sang a song and the rock grew. He sang four more times and the rock rose to its present height.

The bears arrived and the brothers killed all but the giant bear. The bear leaped at the rock, and each time he clawed at it, he made the grooves we see today. The youngest brother shot three arrows at the bear. The arrows did not harm the giant animal but the last arrow he shot killed the bear. The youngest brother then made noises like a bald eagle and four eagles came to him. The brothers and the woman grabbed the eagles' legs. The eagles carried the Indians from the top of the Tower to the ground.

